Listing of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable components, comprising:

a first component that is arranged to edit an electronic document having editable objects;

a second component that is arranged to:

define a global protection element for the electronic document, wherein the global protection element defines document-wide user permission for the editable objects of the electronic document, and

set an override to override the global protection element, wherein setting the override includes defining a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated and defining a second location for the end of the editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated;

~~define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired and to define a second location for the end of the editable object region, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier;~~

a third component that is arranged to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the ~~text~~ object region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier;

a fourth component that is arranged to:

encode the global protection element into the ML format, wherein the global protection element includes an edit attribute that indicates a document-wide user permission for the editable objects, and

encode the override into the ML format, wherein the override includes a start permission tag for at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes an end permission tag for the at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes a specific user identifier that causes an override of the global protection element for the at least one editable object for the specific user in accordance with the level of editing permission of the override while other editable objects of the electronic document are enforced according to the global protection element; and

~~encode in an ML format in the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier; and~~

a fifth component that is arranged to output an ML file according to the ML format ~~that comprises the ML-encoded electronic document and the first and second elements~~.

2. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

3. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 2, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

4. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

5. (Previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 4, wherein the editable objects are cells.

6-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) A method for handling electronic documents, comprising:

editing an electronic document having editable objects;

defining a global protection element for the electronic document, wherein the global protection element defines document-wide user permission for the editable objects of the electronic document;

setting an override to override the global protection element, wherein setting the override includes defining a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated ~~desired~~ and defining a second location for the end of the editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated;~~, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier;~~

~~defining a second location for the end of the editable object region;~~

associating a user identifier for the specific user with the ~~text~~ editable object region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier; and

encoding the electronic document into an ML format, wherein encoding the electronic document into the ML format includes:

encoding the global protection element into the ML format, wherein the global protection element includes an edit attribute that indicates a document-wide user permission for the editable objects, wherein the encoded global protection element includes an enforcement attribute that indicates whether the edit attribute is actuated, wherein the encoded global protection element includes a password attribute that indicates whether the electronic document is password protected;

encoding the override into the ML format, wherein the override includes a start permission tag for at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes an end permission tag for the at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes a specific user identifier that causes an override of the global protection element for the at least one editable object for the specific user in accordance with the level of editing permission of the override while other editable objects of the electronic document are enforced according to the global protection element.

~~encoding in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier.~~

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the editable objects are cells.

15-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently amended) A computer system for displaying and modifying electronic documents, comprising:

an electronic document file that comprises editable objects;

an editor that is arranged to:

define a global protection element for the electronic document, and

set an override to override the global protection element, wherein setting the override includes defining a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated and defining a second location for the end of the editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is associated;

an encoder that is configured to:

encode the global protection element into the ML format, and

encode the override into the ML format, wherein the override includes a start permission tag for at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes an end permission tag for the at least one editable object of the electronic document, wherein the override includes a specific user identifier that causes an override of the global protection element for the at least one editable object for the specific user in accordance with the level of editing permission of the override.

~~an editor that is arranged to define a first location for the start of an editable object region for which a level of editing permission for a specific user is desired, wherein the level of editing permission is indicated by a unique identifier, to define a second location for the end of the editable object region, and to associate a user identifier for the specific user with the text region that is defined by the first and second locations, wherein the user identifier indicates the specific user having the level of editing permission indicated by the unique identifier; and~~

~~an encoder that is configured to encode in an ML format the electronic document, a first element that defines the first location, and a second element that defines the second location, wherein the first or second element further comprises the user identifier.~~

20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein the electronic document is stored in a proprietary format.

21. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

22. (Original) The system of Claim 21, wherein the editable objects comprise one of paragraphs, characters, tables, images, rows, cells, columns, text, and objects native to the application.

23. (Original) The system of Claim 19, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

24. (Original) The system of Claim 23, wherein the editable objects are cells.

25-28. (Cancelled)